



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of City Coordinator

Date: February 25, 2001

To: Council Member Barbara Johnson, Chair
Ways & Means/Budget Committee

Subject: New Central Library Project – Library Site

Recommendation:

Approve the New Central Library Implementation Committee recommendation that the new Central Library and Planetarium be built on the current library block. (4400 – 908 – 9080).

Previous Directives:

August 2000 adoption of the Implementation Committee's recommended site concept calling for a two-block, mixed-use project that includes the library, planetarium, housing, retail, parking and public space.

February 27, 2001 approval of project resolution, organization chart and memorandum of understanding between the City of Minneapolis and Library Board reaffirming their commitment to work in partnership towards the design and construction of the New Central Library.

May 14, 2001 approval of the New Central Library Project Scope, Budget and Schedule.

October 22, 2001 receive and file: Interim Library Location

December 10, 2001 approval of a contract with Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle for architectural services for the Interim Library.

December 21, 2001 authorization to execute a lease for interim library operations.

Prepared/Submitted by: Richard A Johnson, Project Coordinator _____

Approved by: John Moir, City Coordinator _____

Presenters in Committee: Richard A Johnson, Project Coordinator

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact - or – Action is within current department budget
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- ☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation
- ☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- ☐ Other financial impact (Explain):
- ☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee

Coordinator

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)

Neighborhood Notification

Neighborhood Notification

City goals

Zoning Code

Other

Background Supporting Information:

In August 2000, the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Library Board of Trustees approved constructing the new Central Library on the same site as the current Central Library. The decision to construct on the same site was the result of an extensive site evaluation process that had started in 1999. The City and Board also approved a two-block concept utilizing the existing library site and Nicollet Hotel site.

Recently, the Implementation Committee decided that before proceeding into the design phase of the project, both the current library and Nicollet Hotel sites should be reevaluated to determine which site worked best for the new Central Library.

On December 19, 2001 the architects presented the Implementation Committee with multiple options for locating library, planetarium and housing on the two sites. After extensive discussion, the Implementation Committee instructed the architects to proceed with further work on four options. Two of the options involved placing the library on the current (south site) with housing on the north (Nicollet Hotel) site. The other two involved placing the library on the north (Nicollet Hotel) site and with housing on the south (current library site). All of the chosen options involved placing the planetarium on the same site as the library.

On January 16, 2002 the architects presented the Committee with additional information regarding the two general options (library on the south site vs. library on the north site). The Committee engaged in extensive discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Proponents of the south site for the library cited its size and capacity to accommodate the proposed library program, as well as its proximity to the downtown core as its major advantages. Proponents of the north site cited the site's civic and architectural prominence as its major advantage.

The committee was split between proponents of the north and south sites for the library and as a result requested that the Project Coordinator direct the architects to do additional study of the feasibility of placing the library on the north site.

On Feb. 12, 2002 the architects presented the results of their additional study to the Implementation Committee. The results represented four weeks of collaborative effort involving library staff, the design team and construction manager. In summary, the architects recommended that the library could be made to fit on the north site but would require modifications to the library program that conflict with the service goals and objectives that the new library is planned to achieve. The architects also advised that additional problems could be discovered during the design phase. The architects recommended that the south site, being approximately 33,000 square feet larger, would better accommodate the program and service goals of the library.

The architects also proposed a new master site plan option for the committee's consideration – one that could potentially utilize the advantages of both the south and north sites. They proposed building the library on the south site and placing the planetarium in the midst of green space on the north site, with parking under both blocks. This proposed option did not involve housing as originally envisioned in the site plan.

Taking the architects' recommendations under consideration, the Implementation Committee engaged in extensive discussion regarding the implications of not building housing as part of the project and of placing the planetarium on a separate site from the library. The Committee was also informed that the amount of tax increment revenue that was originally estimated by the MCDA to be generated by a residential project was less than initially anticipated due to changes in tax law and the City's policy regarding affordable housing.

Ultimately, the Committee recommended that the library and the planetarium both be built on the south site with additional study done of the north site to determine its best use. The Committee requested that the Project Coordinator work with City staff and project consultants to develop options for the north site and present these at the Committee's March 19th meeting. The Committee would then forward a recommendation back to the City and Board for their consideration.

I will be present at your meeting to respond to questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.